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NEWS RELEASE

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Regents Expand Student Access to Career-Technical Education Programs

High-school students across Rhode Island will have greatly expanded opportunities to participate in career awareness, exploration, and preparation programs, as a result of new regulations on Career and Technical Education that go into effect in July.

The regulations are designed to provide students exposure to the world of work, to offer students the opportunity to learn technical and career-based skills aligned with industry standards, and to enable students to earn credentials that will prepare them for postsecondary education and training programs or for entry into challenging careers.

The Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education unanimously approved the regulations at the Board meeting today (March 1). The career-technical regulations were last revised in 1990.

“Since my appointment as Chairman of the Board of Regents, career-technical education has been one of my prime interests and concerns,” said George D. Caruolo, Chairman of the Board of Regents. “A high-quality system of career-technical education is vital to the future of Rhode Island. One of our priorities on the Board of Regents is to make sure that career-preparation programs have the resources they need and that all students in our state have access to programs that will prepare them to enter the workforce – particularly in areas that will drive our economy in the 21st century.”

“Career-technical education is a vital part of our education system, but the regulations governing career-technical education have not been revised for more than 20 years,” said Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. “The new regulations emphasize the need for a strong connection between career-technical education and the workforce and business community. Our goal is to ensure that all students have access to high-quality career-technical education that can lead them to rewarding jobs and to challenging careers.”

Under the new regulations, students will have access to any approved career-preparation program in the state, not only to those in their district of residence.

The regulations for the first time direct the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) to ensure that career-preparation programs align with and promote workforce and economic development in Rhode Island.

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The regulations also direct RIDE to promote the establishment of career-preparation programs for critical and emerging industries. RIDE intends to focus on the information-technology and health-care industries, which the Governor's Workforce Board has identified as emerging industries in Rhode Island.

Career-preparation programs may be offered in career-technical high schools (the state currently has two, the William M. Davies Jr. Career-Technical High School and the Met), at one of the 8 district-operated career-technical centers, or at a traditional high school. The regulations establish the option of "career innovation programs," subject to RIDE approval, that could provide instruction in community or workplace settings.

Career-awareness activities, which include education and counseling to help students make informed career choices, and career-exploration activities, which enable students to investigate or experience careers or to learn basic job skills (through internships or job-shadow programs, for example), will be offered to all students at all high schools.

RIDE has posted the new regulations on the RIDE website, at:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/Regents/Docs/Enclosures/2012/Encl8a_CTE_Regulations.pdf